[From BOOK 4, by Fra. Perdurabo and Sor. Virakam (Aleister Crowley and Mary
d'Estes Sturges)]

An Interlude. [Footnote: This chapter was dictated in answer to a casual remark by Soror Virakam. Fra. P. said jokingly that everything contained the Truth, if you knew how to find it; and, being challenged, proceeded to make good. It is here inserted, not for any value that it may have, but to test the reader. If it is thought to be a joke, the reader is one useless kind of fool; if it is thought that Fra. P. believes that the makers of the
rimes had any occult intention, he is another useless kind of fool. Soror Virakam chose the rimes at hazard.]

Every nursery rime contains profound magical secrets which are open
to every one who has made a study of the correspondences of the Holy Qabalah. To puzzle out an imaginary meaning for this "nonsense" sets one thinking of the Mysteries; one enters into deep contemplation of holy things and God Himself leads the soul to a real illumination. Hence also the necessity of Incarnation; the soul must descend into all falsity in order to attain All-Truth.

For instance:

> Old Mother Hubbard
> Went to her cupboard
> To get her poor dog a bone;
> When she got there,
> The cupboard was bare,
> And so the poor dog had none.

Who is this ancient and venerable mother of whom it is spoken? Verily she is no other than Binah, as is evident in the use of the holy letter H with which her name begins.

Nor is she the sterile Mother Ama -- but the fertile Aima; for within he she bears Vau, the son, for the second letter of her name, and R,
the penultimate, is the Sun, Tiphareth, the Son.

The other three letters of her name, B, A, and D, are the three paths which join the supernals.

To what cupboard did she go? Even to the most secret caverns of the
Universe. And who is this dog? Is it not the name of God spelt Qabalistically backwards? And what is this bone? The bone is the Wand, the holy Lingam!

The complete interpretation of the rune is now open. This rime is the legend of the murder of Osiris by Typhon.

The limbs of Osiris were scattered in the Nile.

Isis sought them in every corner of the Universe, and she found all
except his sacred lingam, which was not found until quite recently (vide Fuller, "The Star in the West").

Let us take another example from this rich storehouse of magick lore.

Little Bo Peep
She lost her sheep
And couldn't tell where to find them.
Leave them alone!
And they'll come home,
Dragging their tails behind them.

"Bo" is the root meaning Light, form which spring forth such words as Bo-Tree, Bodhisattva, and Buddha.

And "Peep" is Apep, the serpent Apophis. THis poem therefore contains the same symbol as that in the Egyptian and Hebrew Bibles.

The snake is the serpent of Initiation, as the Lamb is the Saviour.

This ancient one, the Wisdom of Eternity, sits in its old anguish awaiting the Redeemer. And this holy verse triumphantly assures us that there is no need for anxiety. The Saviours will come after the other, at their own good pleasure, and as they may be needed, and drag their tails, that is to say those who follow out their holy commandment, to the ultimate
goal.

Again we read:

Little Miss Muffet
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating of curds and whey,
Up came a big spider,
And sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffett away.

Little Miss Muffett unquestionably represents Malkah, for she is unmarried. She is seated upon a "tuffet"; _id est_, she is the unregenerate
soul upon Tophet, the pit of hell. And she eats curds and whey, that is, not the pure milk of the mother, but milk which has undergone decomposition.

But who is this spider? Verily herein is a venerable arcanum connoted! Like all insects, the spider represents a demon. But why a spider? Who is this spider "who taketh hold with her hands, and is in the Kings Palaces"? The name of this spider is Death. It is the fear of death which first makes the soul aware of its forlorn condition.

It would be interesting if tradition had preserved for us Miss Muffett's subsequent adventures.

But we must proceed to consider the interpretation of the following rime:

Little Jack Horner
Sat in a corner,
Eating a Christmas pie.
He stuck in his thumb,
And pulled out a plum,
And said, "What a good boy am I!"

In the interpretation of this remarkable poem there is a difference between two great schools of Adepts.

One holds that Jack is merely a corruption of John, Ion, he who goes -- Hermes, the Messenger. The other prefers to take Jack simply and reverently as Iacchus, the spiritual form of Bacchus. But it does not matter very much whether we insist upon the swiftness or the rapture of the Holy Spirit of God; and that it is he of whom it is spoken here is evident, for the name Horner could be applied by none other than even the most casual reader of the Holy Gospel and the works of Congreve. And the context makes this even clearer, for he sits in a corner, that is the place of Christ, the Corner Stone, eating, that is, enjoying, that which the birth of Christ assures to us. He is the Comforter who replaces the absent Saviour. If there was still any doubt of His identity it would be cleared up by the fact that it is the thumb, which is attributed to the element of Spirit, and not one of the four fingers of the four lesser elements, which he sticks into the pie of the new dispensation. He plucks forth one who is ripe, no doubt to send him forth as a teacher into the world, and rejoices that he is so well carrying out the will of his Father.

Let us pass from this most blessed subject to yet another.

> Tom, Tom, the piper's son,
> Stole a pig and away he run.
> The pig was eat,
> And Tom was beat,
> And Tom went roaring down the street.

This is one of the more exoteric of these rimes. In fact, it is no much better than a sun-myth. Tom is Toum, the God of the Sunset (called the Son of Apollo, the Piper, the maker of music.) The only difficulty in the poem concerns the pig; for anyone who has watched an angry sunset in the Tropics upon the sea, will recognize how incomparable a description of that sunset is given in that wonderful last line. Some have thought that the pig refers to the evening sacrifice, others that she is Hathor, the Lady of the West, in her more sensual spect.

But it is probable that this poem is only the first stanza of an epic. It has all the characteristic marks. Someone said of the Iliad that it did not finish, but merely stopped. This is the same. We may be sure that there is more of this poem. It tells us too much and too little. How came this tragedy of the eating of a merely stolen pig? Unveil this mystery of who "eat" it!

It must be abandoned, then, as at least partially insoluble. Let us consider this poem:

> Hickory, dickory, dock!
> The mouse ran up the clock;
> The clock struck one,

And the mouse ran down,
Hickory, dickory, dock!

Here we are on higher ground at once. The clock symbolizes the spinal column, or if you prefer it, Time, chosen as one of the conditions of normal consciousness. The mouse is the Ego; "Mus", a mouse, being only "Sum", "I am", spelt Qabalistically backwards.

This Ego or Prana or Kundalini force being driven up the spine, the clock strikes one, that is, the duality of consciousness is abolished. And the force again subsides to its original level.

"Hickory, dickory, dock!" is perhaps the mantra which was used by the adept who constructed this rime, thereby hoping to fix it in the minds of men; so that they might attain to Samadhi by the same method. Others attribute to it a more profound significance -- which is impossible to go into at this moment, for we must turn to: --

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall;
Humpty Dumpty got a great fall;
All the king's horses
And all the king's men
Couldn't set up Humpty Dumpty again.

This is so simple as hardly to require explanation. Humpty Dumpty is of course the Egg of Spirit, and the wall is the Abyss -- his "fall" is therefore the descent of spirit into matter; and it is only too painfully familiar to us that all the king's horses and all his men cannot restore us to the height.

Only the King Himself can do that!

But one can hardly comment upon a theme which has been so fruitfully treated by Ludovicus Carolus, that most holy illuminated man of God. His masterly treatment of the identity of the three reciprocating paths of Daleth, Teth, and Pe, is one of the most wonderful passages in the Holy Qabalah. His resolution of what we take to be the bond of slavery into very love, the embroidered neckband of honour bestowed upon us by the King himself, is one of the most sublime passages in this class of literature.

Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater,
Had a wife and couldn't keep her.
He put her in a peanut shell;
Then he kept her very well.

This early authentic text of the Hinayana School of Buddhism is much esteemed even to-day by the more cultured and devoted followers of that school.

The pumpkin is of course the symbol of resurrection, as is familiar to all students of the story of Jonah and the gourd.

Peter is therefore the Arahat, who has put an end to his series of

resurrections. That he is called Peter is a reference to the symbolizing of
Arahats as stones in the great wall of the guardians of mankind. His wife is of course (by the usual symbolism) his body, which he could not keep until he put her in a peanut shell, the yellow robe of a Bhikku.

Buddha says that if any man became an Arahat he must either take the
vows of a Bhikku that very day, or die, and it is this saying of Buddha's that the unknown poet wished to commemorate.

Taffy was a Welshman
Taffy was a thief;
Taffy came to my house
And stole a leg of beef.
I went to Taffy's house;
Taffy was in bed.
I took a carving knife
And cut off Taffy's head.

Taffy is merely short for Taphtatharath, the Spirit of Mercury and the God of Welshmen or thieves. "My house" is of course equivalent to "my magick circle." Note that Beth, the letter of Mercury and "The Magus", means "a house."

The beef is the symbol of the Bull, Apis the Redeemer. This is therefore that which is written, "Oh my God, disguise thy glory! Come as a thief, and let us steal away the sacraments!"

In the following verse we find that Taffy is "in bed", owind to the
operation of the sacrament. THe great task of the Alchemist has been accomplished; the mercury is fixed.

One can then take the Holy Dagger, and separate the Caput Mortuum from the Elixer. Some Alchemists believe that the beef represents that dense physical substance which is imbibed by Mercury for his fixation; but here as always we should prefer the more spiritual interpretation.

Bye, Baby Bunting!
Daddy's gone a-hunting.
He's gone to get a rabbit-skin
To wrap my Baby Bunting in.

This is mystical charge to the new-born soul to keep still, to remain steadfast in meditation; for, in _Bye_, Beth is the letter of thought, Yod that of the Hermit. It tells the soul that he Father of All will clothe him about with His own majestical silence. For is not the rabbit he "who lay low and said nuffin'"?

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man!
Bake me a cake as fast as you can!
Pat it and prick it and mark it with P!
Bake it in the oven for baby and me!

This rime is usually accompanied (even today in the nursery) with a

ceremonial clapping of hands -- the symbol of Samadhi. Compare what is said
on this subject in our famous "Advent" passage in Thessalonians.

The cake is of course the bread of the sacrament, and it would ill become Frater P. to comment upon the third line -- though it may be remarked that even among the Catholics the wafer has always been marked with
a phallus or a cross.